DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 268 111 SP 027 467

AUTHOR Dyck, W.; Wouters, P.
TITLE A Peculiar Evaluation of Belgian Teacher Education Programs.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 31-April 4, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Education Majors; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Individual Differences; Preservice Teacher Education; *Program Attitudes; *Student Attitudes; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Belgium

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine differences between the attitudes and beliefs of teacher education students from two different teacher education programs in Belgium. A total of 195 students and 77 graduates from the University of Antwerp, and 240 students and 60 graduates from the University of Ghent responded to a questionnaire regarding attitudinal statements about teaching and learning, the role of individual differences, the improvability of intelligence, the allocation of teacher resources, the responsibility of teachers for pupil outcomes, and expectations about the distribution of outcomes in the classroom. The teacher education program at the University of Antwerp was more innovative and rigorous than that at the University of Ghent. Students and graduates from both programs indicated that they knew or expected most classrooms to be very heterogeneous in aptitude and future achievement. Most also believed that teachers have no or only a slight impact on these individual differences among students. Learning outcomes were perceived as a static, fundamentally unchangeable phenomenon. (CB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED268111

A Peculiar Evaluation of Belgian Teacher Education Programs

UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN

UNIVERSITAIRE INSTELLING ANTWERPEN

Universiteitsplein 1

2610 Wilrijk

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. Dyck

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SP027 467

A Peculiar Evaluation of Belgian Teacher Education Programs

W. Dyck
Department Teacher Education
University of Antwerp (U.I.A.)

P. Wouters
International School of Philosophy

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, March 31-April 4, 1985.

Session 51.22 Mastery Learning in Practice: Implementation and Outcomes.

1. Two Training Programs

In Belgium, pre-service teacher training for the upper grades in high school is entrusted to the universities. Everywhere the Education Act of 1929 still applies. With one exception, at the university of Antwerp, teacher education is a mere appendage to the graduate field of study and is hardly been taken seriously.

Three courses out of the undergraduate curriculum of psychology and education (Experimental Psychology, History of Education, Educational Psychology) form the general theoretical basis; next for each school subject a professor is appointed to talk about the specific methodology and finally the students have to give a few lessons. That's it for the rest of their lives. It is clear that such a certification has little to do with a professional examination.

In contrast and unique in Belgium is the preparation at the university of Antwerp. An autonomous department was established in 1972. The curriculum is structured as a set of teaching skills necessary in the micro-, meso- and macro-structure of the educational system. The integration of general courses and specific subject matter courses is systematically organized. The training takes two years.

At the moment the students are being offered an education program of 135h of compulsory instruction and 75h of optional subjects. As to the teaching practice in secondary schools the students are required to observe and analyse at least ten lessons. They also have to plan and teach at least ten lessons.

For this teaching practice there is a choice among forty schools in the Antwerp area. The number of teacher-tutors who supervise the students is between two hundred and fifty and three hundred. Members of the staff visit the schools regularly. The part-time (25%) members of the staff have as their main task the supervision of the student-teachers in the teaching practice period. They are well-motivated and experienced teachers in secondary education who are willing to devote part of their time to cooperating in an innovated teacher training program. They may be considered to form a link between theory and practice.

Every year about two hundred students obtain the Certificate in Education in the following branches of study: Germanic Philology (Dutch-English; Dutch-German; English-German), Romance Philology, Political and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Cellbiology, Biology.

The faculty proclaims an innovative strategy and states that proposals for reforming teacher education in Belgium are inspired by the example in Antwerp.

Our research question was: 'Is there a difference in quality between the two kinds of programs, taken the expectations of (student)teachers about pupil learning outcomes as a yardstick?' (Dyck & Wouters, 1982, 1983).

2. Theoretical Framework

We looked at these programs from a peculiar theoretical perspective, namely that of instructional paradigms which focus on student learning (Dyck & Wellens, 1979; Wouters, 1981). On the next page we give a scheme with the two paradigms in question: the dominant prediction-selection paradigm and the emerging paradigm of outcome-based instruction (Bloom, 1968, 1976, 1985). We used the structure of Imre Lakatos' research programs (RP) to enlighten our approach (Lakatos, 1979).

R.P.'s have a common structure. First of all, the hard core. This is the small set of convictions that constitutes the heart of an R.P. There would be nothing scientific about R.P.'s, if they were 'nothing but' their hard cores, because the competition would be merely ideological.

So another structural element comes in, namely the protective belt; this is the proper scientific part of the picture. The belt consists of theories, accepted research instruments, techniques and methodologies. The fundamental function of a protective belt is to hide the core from direct attack. We may rephrase this idea as follows: a hard core protects itself from falsification by subsidiary statements. The formulation of these is guided by a third and last element: its heuristics. Positive heuristics contain information about where to look for additional evidence and arguments; negative heuristics on the contrary deal with research that is to be avoided or from which no fruitful results are to be expected.

We will not go into the details of this scheme; we would rather let it speak for itself. Furthermore it was not our intention to give a unique or a definite description, but only a global insight in the complexity of an instructional paradigm.

RP I

Prediction-Selection-Paradigm

HARD CORE

Static conception of individual differences

POSITIVE HEURISTICS

Revealing and analyzing individual differences

PROTECTIVE BELT

'Cross country' model of instruction

Pygmalion effect

Heterogeneity as outcome and purpose of instruction

Norm-referenced testing

IQ - Ability

Selection of talent

Correlation prediction studies

Nominal period of instruction and learning

.
.
.

PROTECTIVE BELT

Model of mastery learning

Virtually all students can succeed

Striving towards minimal variance

Criterium-referenced testing

Achievement

Development of talent

Causal analysis of dynamic models

Time-on-task

.
.
.

RP II

Outcome-Based Paradigm

HARD CORE

Aiming at equal outcomes

POSITIVE HEURISTICS

Searching for alterable variables

3. Research

We constructed a questionnaire with many elements of the instructional paradigms. There was a list of attitudinal statements about teaching and learning and the respondents were propounded to reflect upon some assignments. There were questions and assignments about the role of individual differences, the improvability of intelligence, the allocation of teacher resources in a heterogeneous classroom situation, the responsability of the teacher for pupil outcomes, expectations about the distribution of outcomes in the classroom, etc.

The questionnaire was sent (in 1983) to two target groups in two universities: the University of Antwerp and the State University of Ghent, one with the traditional training program. The two groups considered were:

1. graduates who just completed teacher education. We assumed that a priori and intentionalistic beliefs determine to a large extent what will go on in the classroom.
2. graduate students at the very beginning of their teacher training program. They form the comparison group.

A total of 572 questionnaires were administered
- 195 students and 77 graduates from the university of Antwerp
- 240 students and 60 graduates from the university of Ghent

4. Results

Let's consider the answers to the assignment concerning the expectation distributions. The first assignment (inspired by Good & Dembo, 1973) goes as follows:
"Imagine, you are a teacher and you will meet a new class at the beginning of the school year. Probably not all pupils are at the same intellectual level with respect to your subject matter. How do you expect the pupils to be distributed?" The following categories were presented: excellent, good, average, poor, very poor.
Asked was to give a percentage.
The following question is: "You teach this very same class throughout a schoolyear in optimal conditions. Which distribution do you expect on the final examination?" The same categories are presented and also is asked to give a percentage.

In table 1 and on the next page the results are presented for all the respondents. It was not necessary to report the data for the sub- groups because there were no significant differences.

Table 1: Expectation Distributions of Pupil Learning Outcomes (N=566)

	Start Schoolyear		Examinations	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Excellent	7.4	4.7	9.1	6.2
Good	22.9	9.7	28.9	12.3
Average	47.9	12.2	47.3	14.2
Poor	15.5	7.7	11.0	7.3
Very Poor	6.0	5.2	3.5	4.5

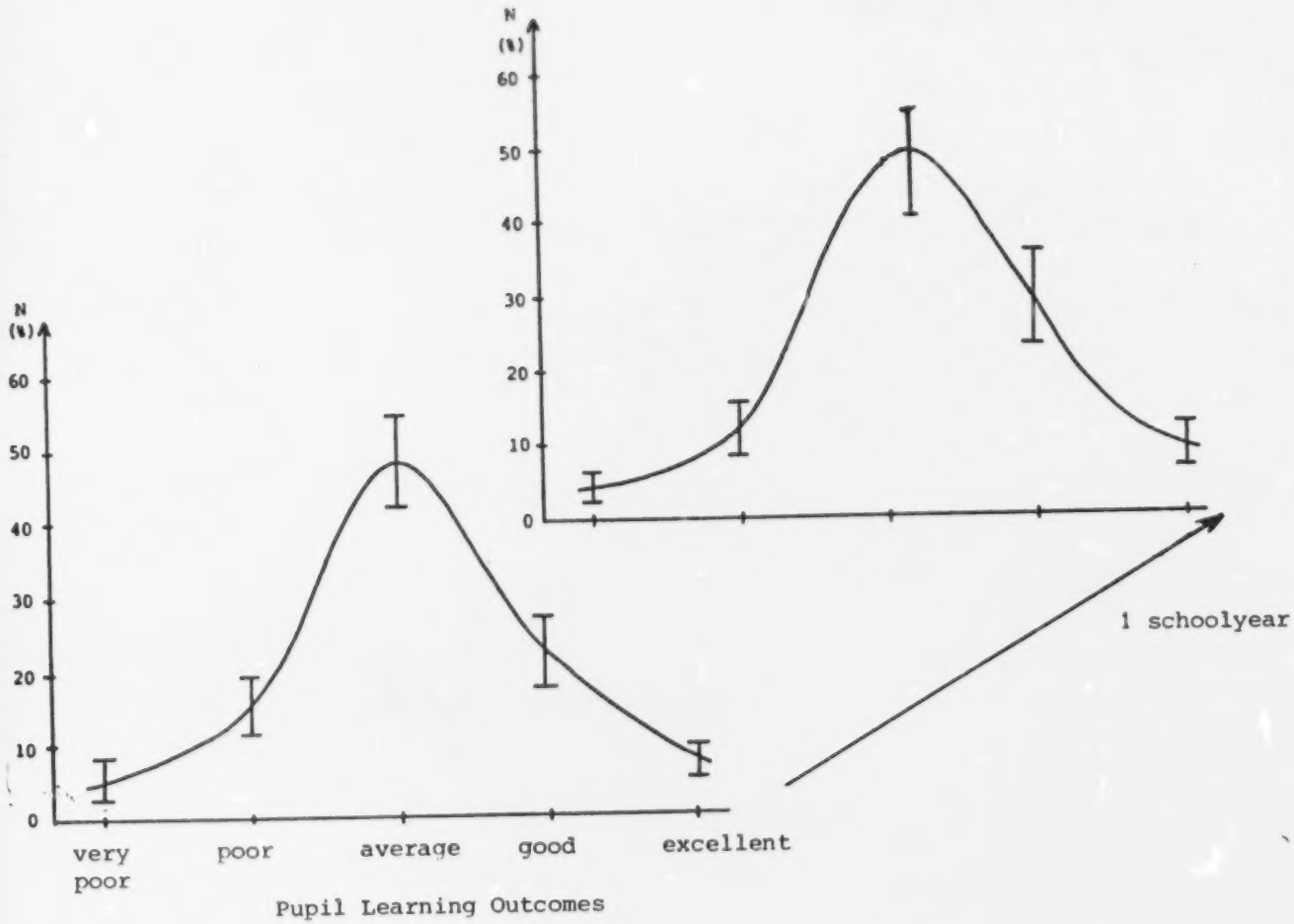
This is of course a very important finding. Furthermore it is remarkable that only one percent didn't give an answer to these questions. These respondents answered that they simply do not know what to expect. Clearly this wasn't the case for the other ninety nine percent. They already 'know' that a new class with unknown pupils will be very heterogeneous in aptitude and future achievement vis à vis the different subject areas. Also they believe that a teacher has no or only a slight impact on these individual differences.

Thus, it was interesting to discover the high degree to which almost all respondents think of learning outcomes as a static, fundamentally unchangeable phenomenon. The results show a neat reproduction of the bell-shaped curve. These findings influence the interpretation of most of the other empirical data (Wouters, 1982).

At present teacher education does not matter very much, neither with the so-called new training program in Antwerp, nor with one 'annex' to the graduate studies.

Of course we are aware of the exploratory database and the limited scope of our investigation but nevertheless we think that instructional paradigms are useful evaluation tools.

We want to conclude with a question, namely: 'What is a normal expectation for the time lag between research findings of effective instruction and their <u>systematic</u> incorporation in teacher preparation programs?'


N
(%)
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
very poor
poor
average
good
excellent
Pupil Learning Outcomes
1 schoolyear
N=566

5. References

Bloom, B. (1968). Learning for Mastery, UCLA-Evaluation Comment, 1, n°2.

Bloom, B. (1976). Human Characteristics and School Learning. McGraw Hill, New York.

Bloom, B. (1985). Developing Talent in Young People. Ballantine Books. New York.

Dyck, W. & J. Wellens (1979). Een opkomend instructieparadigma: beheersingsleren, Persoon en Gemeenschap, 31, 180-190.

Dyck, W. & P. Wouters (1982). Toekomstige leerkrachten over heterogeniteit van leerprestaties. In Van Dorp, C. & A. Pilot (eds.) Aspecten van Onderwijsresearch. Swets & Zeitlinger, Lisse.

Dyck, W. & P. Wouters (1983). Eigensoortige evaluatie van een leerkrachtenopleiding: instructieparadigma's in de praktijk. In Veenman, S. & H. Coonen (eds.) Onderwijs en Opleiding. Swets & Zeitlinger, Lisse.

Good, I. & M. Dembo (1973). Teacher Expectations: Self Report Data, School Review, 81, 247-253.

Lakatos, I. (1979). Falsification and the methodology of research programmes. In: Lakatos, I. & A. Musgrave. Criticism and the growth of knowledge, University Press, Cambridge.

Wouters, P. (1981). Wetenschapsfilosofische analyse van hedendaagse onderwijsresearch en -praktijk. Paper ORD '81, Maastricht.

Wouters, P. (1982). Paradigmatische Evaluatie van de Leerkrachtenopleiding. FKFO-Rapport, U.I.A., Antwerpen.